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Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board

Fire Damages and Losses

in the
Interlake and Cowan Area

1989

Final Report

91-05769/

MANITOBA DISASTER ASSISTANCE BOARD

FINAL REPORT ON THE 1989 FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

IN THE INTERLAKE AND COWAN AREA

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Manitoba

Government Services

Manitoba Disaster
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January 21, 1991

The Honourable Albert Driedger
Minister of Government Services
Room 203 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

Dear Mr. Minister:

We wish to advise that the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, established under Section 17(1) of the Emergency Measures Act, has completed the work assigned to it regarding the Fire Damages and Losses Program in the Interlake and Cowan area. We, therefore, now submit the final report of the Board's activities and findings under this program.

We are grateful for the privilege of being of service to the residents of Manitoba.

Yours truly,

Joseph Masy, Secretary

Sydney Reimer, Chairman

Lawrence Boguski, Vice-Chairman

Lois Edie, Member

FORWARD

The severe fires which struck the Interlake and Cowan area in May of 1989 caused a number of farmers to suffer damages to their fencing, homes, outbuildings, and loss of hay bales and many personal items. In addition, a number of municipalities and Reserves incurred a great deal of fire-fighting costs.

The Manitoba Government announced an assistance program to financially assist those individuals that incurred losses and damages, and also an assistance program to financially assist the municipalities with their fire-fighting costs.

In the pages that follow, the details of this program are outlined as well as the activities and findings of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Board wishes to express its appreciation to the Government of Manitoba for providing financial assistance to resolve the problems which arose from the severe fires in the Interlake and Cowan area. Particular thanks should go to the Honourable Albert Driedger, Minister of Government Services, and his staff, all of whom provided the Board with information and other resources to ensure the program was a success.

The Board is grateful to the Municipal Councils and Bands and to Miss Ardene Franz, Resident Administrator for the L.G.D. of Grahamdale, Mrs. Linda Podaima, Resident Administrator for the L.G.D. of Fisher, Mr. Mel Bullerwell, Secretary-Treasurer for the R.M. of Siglunes, and Mr. H. K. Rutherford, Secretary-Treasurer, R.M. of Eriksdale for their excellent cooperation with the Board in determining their fire-fighting costs and assisting with the private claims.

The Board would also like to recognize the great contribution of the Mennonite Disaster Services for their volunteer help in clearing up farm yards, counselling the victims after the fires were over, and rebuilding many of the fences for the farmers.

Finally, the Board would like to thank its staff for the diligent and conscientious manner in which the business of the Board was conducted.

SECTION 1

LOSSES AND DAMAGES FROM THE MAY 1989 FIRES

IN THE INTERLAKE AND COWAN AREAS

The fires that struck the Interlake and Cowan areas in May 1989 caused a number of farmers to incur great losses of their hay bales, moveable objects, and damages to their pasture fences, outbuildings and homes.

In addition, a number of municipalities and reserves incurred a substantial amount of fire-fighting costs from the fire.

The fire was caused due to two main factors. Firstly, there was a below normal precipitation during this period of time for the area.

Secondly, above normal temperatures resulted in very dry conditions, allowing fires to start very easily. In addition, high winds caused the fires to spread very quickly.

Overall, the fire had a severe impact on the Province since many of the farmers depend on farming for their livelihood and much of the trees that were lost could not be cut by logging companies.

A full report on the extent of the fires is enclosed under Appendix A.

SECTION 2

ORDERS-IN-COUNCIL

A. Establishment of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board

The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board was established under Section 17(1) of the Emergency Measures Act. It is responsible for: recommending to the Minister of Government Services government policy on disaster assistance claims and reporting to the Minister of Government Services on disaster assistance matters. The Board provides a readily activated mechanism for dealing with damage related matters referred to it as a result of natural or human-made disasters.

B. Appointment of the Board Members (Appendix B)

Order-in-Council 893|88 appointed Mr. Sydney Reimer as a member and Chairman, Mr. Lorne Boguski as a member and Vice-Chairman, and Mrs. Lois Edie as a member of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board. This Order-in-Council outlined the powers and remuneration of the members of the Board.

C. The Fire Losses and Damages Program

The fire losses and damages program was in the form of an ex-gratia cash grant of up to $30,000.00 after a deductible of 20% of approved costs, for individuals in the various municipalities that incurred damages and losses from the fires in May of 1989 in the Interlake and Cowan areas. Financial

assistance was provided to help defray the costs of loss of such items as hay bales and various moveable objects, and damages to pasture fences. The program was administered by the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board.

The other part of the program was for assistance to the L.G.D. of Armstrong, R.M. of Eriksdale, L.G.D. of Fisher, L.G.D. of Grahamdale, R.M. of Minitonas, L.G.D. of Mountain, Northern Affairs, R.M. of Siglunes, Fisher River Indian Reserve, Chemawawin First Nation Band, Crane River Reserve, Hollow Water Reserve, Jackhead Reserve, Lake Manitoba Reserve, Manigotogan Community Council, Peguis Reserve, Pine Creek Reserve, and Shoal River Reserve for their fire-fighting costs. The assistance is normally based on the following formula:

Municipal Per Capita Eligible Cost	Provincial Share	Municipal Share
$0.00 to $1.00	0%	100%
$1.01 to $3.00	50%	50%
$3.01 to $5.00	75%	25%
$5.01 Plus	90%	10%

However, since the total costs for these fires was over the threshold of $1 million and therefore qualified for federal assistance, the above formula was waived and the municipalities were responsible for a straight 10% of their costs.

It should be noted that the cost-sharing with the individuals (20% deductible) and the municipalities (10%) was waived for the Reserves at the request of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. They were compensated at 100% of their costs. The province was reimbursed for all costs on the Reserves by the federal government.

SECTION 3

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In May of 1989, fire problems were reported in the Interlake and Cowan areas of the province.

It soon became apparent that the fire situation in the next few days would quickly worsen in these areas.

On May 16, 1989, the Honourable Albert Driedger, Minister of Government Services, requested the Chairman of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, Mr. Sydney Reimer, fly over the areas affected in order to determine the seriousness of the problem. Mr. Reimer was accompanied by Mr. Joseph Masi, Secretary to the Board.

On May 18, 1989, Mr. Reimer, Board Member, Lois Edie, and Mr. Masi visited the R.M. of Siglunes and L.G.D. of Grahamdale in order to get a first-hand report of the damages and to explain the procedures for applying for disaster assistance.

As a result of these meetings, the Board passed a motion on May 25, 1989 recommending compensation for individuals, municipalities and reserves that suffered losses and damages as a result of the severe fires. On June 19, 1989, the Board also set a deadline of July 30, 1989 in order for applications to be received by the Board.

During this period, the Honourable Albert Driedger was writing his federal counterpart, the Honourable Bill McKnight, Minister Responsible for Emergency Preparedness, requesting federal assistance to meet the costs of these fires. (It should be noted that a few months later, severe fires affected much of northern Manitoba. The Provincial Government is attempting to cost-share

the total fire costs from the spring and summer fires with the Federal Government. At this time, final cost-sharing with Ottawa has not been finalized.)

On July 19, 1989, the province approved a compensation program for individuals and municipalities that incurred damages and losses from the spring fires. The assistance was in the form of an ex-gratia grant, up to a maximum $30,000.00 after a deductible of 20% of approved costs. The assistance was provided to help defray the costs of damage to outbuildings, fencing, loss of hay bales, and various moveable objects. The other part of the program was assistance to municipalities for their fire-fighting costs. The municipalities were responsible for a straight 10% of their costs.

After the announcement was made regarding compensation, the files at the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board were ready for assessment of damages and losses. These damages and losses were calculated, based on the Board's compensation guidelines. Files were assessed by the evaluating staff and approved by the Chief Evaluator. The files were then handed to the Secretary for his scrutiny and approval and a member of the Board was required to sign this approval.

Following this approval, award letters were prepared and signed by a Board member along with the Secretary. The award letters were then mailed to the applicants along with the financial assistance agreement form. The purpose of this form was to ensure that the claimants did not receive any other compensation from other sources for his losses, and secondly, that the claimant was satisfied with the amount of compensation. In situations where the assessment of structural damages amounted to less than $2,000.00, the cheque voucher was prepared and sent to the Department of Finance along with

the award letter and the financial assistance agreement. This procedure also applied to awards granted for moveable objects, personal effects, etc. except that no limitation was placed on the amount of the award letter or voucher, provided the amount was within the limits approved by the Order-in-Council. In this case a cheque requisition and the financial assistance agreement were required to be signed by the claimant.

Each award letter had a number and these numbers were listed on the index cards in the appropriate space. Files were then placed in completed file drawers in numerical order for future references.

Fencing damages were handled in a somewhat different manner in that no voucher was made at the time of the award letter. In these cases, the original bills were required to be submitted by the applicant. From these bills a cheque requisition form was prepared, handed to an inspector, whose task was to visit the property and confirm the repairs had been completed. Both the applicant and the inspector signed statements on this form that the work was satisfactorily completed. These forms were then returned to the office, inserted in the file, checked and signed by the Secretary, along with a Board member. A cheque voucher was then made up and after appropriate signatures were affixed to the voucher, the voucher was sent to the Provincial Audit Office for approval and processing of the cheque.

The same procedures outlined above applied to the Reserves, except that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs made the formal request to the Board to compensate the individuals and Reserves for their losses and damages. In addition, all the deductions outlined previously were waived for the Reserves at the request of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and all costs associated with the program would be reimbursed to the Province by the Federal Government. A copy of all the newspaper articles about the fires is enclosed under Appendix C.

SECTION 4

STATISTICAL SUMMARY
OF THE 1989 FIRE LOSSES AND DAMAGES PROGRAM

A. Summary of Individuals who Received Financial Assistance

The following is a summary of all the claims submitted to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board regarding the fire losses and damages program.

L.G.D. of Alonsa

Total Claims Received by the Board		10
Completed Claims		9
- Progress Payments	- 2	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		1

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	3	$ 2,754.04
Awards Over $2,000.00	6	57,827.74
TOTAL	9	$60,581.78

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$21,730.16
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$38,851.62
	$60,581.78
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 6,731.31

L.G.D. of Armstrong

Total Claims Received by the Board	2
Completed Claims	1
- Progress Payments - 0	
- Appeal Cases - 0	
No Claim	1

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00		0
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$4,296.04
TOTAL	1	$4,296.04

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$4,296.04
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	0
	$4,296.04
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$4,296.04

R.M. of Eriksdale

Total Claims Received by the Board		12
Completed Claims		12
- Progress Payments	- 4	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	4	$ 3,190.91
Awards Over $2,000.00	8	$56,716.09
TOTAL	12	$59,907.00

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$37,338.56
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$22,568.44
	$59,907.00
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$4,992.25

R.M. of Ethelbert

Total Claims Received by the Board		1
Completed Claims		1
- Progress Payments	0	
- Appeal Cases	0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$2,100.87
TOTAL	2	$2,100.87

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$2,100.87
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	0
	$2,100.87
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$2,100.87

L.G.D. of Fisher

Total Claims Received by the Board	23
Completed Claims	19
- Progress Payments - 7	
- Appeal Cases - 0	
No Claim	4

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	5	$ 7,090.60
Awards Over $2,000.00	14	$106,860.94
TOTAL	19	$113,951.54

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$ 56,441.07
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$ 57,510.47
	$113,951.54

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 5,997.45

R.M. of Gimli

Total Claims Received by the Board		14
Completed Claims		12
- Progress Payments	- 3	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		2

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	3	$ 3,738.59
Awards Over $2,000.00	9	$41,436.05
TOTAL	12	$45,174.64

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$21,042.96
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$24,131.68
	$45,174.64

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 3,764.55

L.G.D. of Grahamdale

Total Claims Received by the Board		78
Completed Claims		71
- Progress Payments	- 27	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		7

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claim	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	17	$ 16,516.59
Awards Over $2,000.00	54	$508,522.21
TOTAL	71	$525,038.80

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$313,674.74
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$211,364.06
	$525,038.80

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 7,394.91

R.M. of Minitonas

Total Claims Received by the Board		4
Completed Claims		4
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	3	$2,032.00
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$3,818.88
TOTAL	4	$5,850.88

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	0
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$5,850.88
	$5,850.88

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$1,462.72

R.M. of Mossey River

Total Claims Received by the Board		2
Completed Claims		1
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		1

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000	1	$2,986.36
TOTAL	1	$2,986.36

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$2,986.36
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	0
	$2,986.36
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$2,986.36

L.G.D. of Mountain

Total Claims Received by the Board		45
Completed Claims		38
- Progress Payments	- 4	
- Appeal Cases	- 1	
No Claim		7

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	28	$16,021.63
Awards Over $2,000.00	10	$47,152.86
TOTAL	38	$63,174.49

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$25,528.23
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$37,646.26
	$63,174.49

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 1,662.49

Northern Affairs

Total Claims Received by the Board		46
Completed Claims		39
- Progress Payments	- 11	
- Appeal Cases	- 1	
No Claim		7

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	15	$ 10,669.42
Awards Over $2,000.00	24	$189,831.07
TOTAL	39	$200,500.49

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$ 59,313.91
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$141,186.58
	$200,500.49

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 5,141.04

R.M. of Siglunes

Total Claims Received by the Board		41
Completed Claims		40
- Progress Payments	- 15	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		1

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	15	$ 18,562.77
Awards Over $2,000.00	25	$233,759.21
TOTAL	40	$252,321.98

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$142,309.07
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$110,012.91
	$252,321.98

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 6,308.05

Chemawawin Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		1
Completed Claims		1
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$3,802.98
TOTAL	1	$3,802.98

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	0
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$3,802.98
	$3,802.98

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim $3,802.98

Easterville Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		2
Completed Claims		2
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000.00	2	$9,408.44
TOTAL	2	$9,408.44

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	0
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$9,408.44
	$9,408.44

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim $4,704.22

Fairford Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		1
Completed Claims		1
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$7,489.75
TOTAL	1	$7,489.75

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	669.75
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$6,820.00
	$7,489.75

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$7,489.75

Fisher River Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		8
Completed Claims		8
- Progress Payments	- 1	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	5	$ 4,721.31
Awards Over $2,000.00	3	$16,187.50
TOTAL	8	$20,908.81

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$ 4,854.51
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$16,054.30
	$20,908.81

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim $ 2,613.60

Jackhead Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		33
Completed Claims		32
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		1

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	31	$10,106.10
Awards Over $2,000.00	1	$ 2,228.46
TOTAL	32	$12,334.56

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	0
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$12,334.56
	$12,334.56

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim $ 385.46

Lake Manitoba Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		4
Comleted Claims		4
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	2	$ 3,525.82
Awards Over $2,000.00	2	$12,786.75
TOTAL	4	$16,312.57

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$16,312.57
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	0
	$16,312.57
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 3,583.21

Lake St. Martin Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		3
Completed Claims		3
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		0

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	0	0
Awards Over $2,000.00	3	$11,164.56
	3	$11,164.56

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	0
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$11,164.56
	$11,164.56

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim $ 3,721.52

Peguis Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		47
Completed Claims		39
- Progress Payments	- 4	
- Appeal Cases	- 2	
No Claim		8

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	17	$ 13,633.38
Awards Over $2,000.00	22	$137,752.40
TOTAL	39	$151,385.78

Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages	$ 35,706.54
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages	$115,679.24
	$151,385.78

Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$ 3,881.69

Pine Creek Indian Reserve

Total Claims Received by the Board		6
Completed Claims		6
- Progress Payments	- 0	
- Appeal Cases	- 0	
No Claim		

Compensation Costs

	Number of Claims	Amount of Compensation
Awards Under $2,000.00	3	$ 3,065.84
Awards Over $2,000.00	3	$10,468.87
TOTAL		$13,534.71
Total Amount Paid for Fencing Damages		$11,584.71
Total Amount Paid for Other Damages		$ 1,950.00
		$13,534.71
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim		$ 2,089.12

Grand Totals:

Number of Claims	383
Amount of Compensation	$1,582,227.03
Average Amount of Compensation per Claim	$4,131.14

B. **Summary of Municipalities (Non Reserve) which Received Financial Assistance for Public Sector Damages**

Municipality	Population	Approved Payments Total
L.G.D. of Armstrong		$ 15,984.92
R.M. of Eriksdale		54,186.62
L.G.D. of Fisher		43,770.92
L.G.D. of Grahamdale		82,074.49
Manigotogan		3,109.10
R.M. of Minitonas		841.90
L.G.D. of Mountain		19,317.65
R.M. of Siglunes		32,575.28
TOTAL		**$251,860.88**

C. **Summary of Indian Reserves which Received Financial Assistance for Public Sector Damages**

Municipality	Population	Approved Payments Total
Chemawawin		$ 140.00
Crane River		13,323.85
Fisher River		59,446.76
Hollow Water		49,120.20
Jackhead		55,849.41
Lake Manitoba		6,650.00
Northern Affairs		36,132.25
Peguis		29,498.12

Municipality	Population	Approved Payments Total
Peguis Community Pasture		$144,077.43
Pine Creek		19,848.58
Shoal River		11,572.81
TOTAL		**$425,659.41**

Total Compensation Paid Under the Program (A + B + C) **$2,259,747.32**

D. **Administration Costs**

Reserves and Non Reserves	**$126,514.21**

*NOTE:
Administration costs compared to compensation costs was 5.6%. For the Northern Trappers Program, the administration costs would be somewhat higher due to having to fly in on inspection of cabins and also the great distances to travel.

SECTION 5

CONCLUSION

The Board is satisfied that the Fire Losses and Damages Program was administered according to the Terms of Reference and Limits of Compensation referred to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

The spring fires in the Interlake and Cowan areas were probably the worst in the history of Manitoba. Individuals incurred great losses not to mention severe emotional trauma because of the fires.

The total economic loss from these fires to the province can never be measured accurately. However, the assistance provided by the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board did help alleviate some of the effects of the fires.

The Board wishes to express its commitment to continue to serve the Government of Manitoba whenever disaster assistance programs are referred to the Board for administration and implementation. It is only with the full cooperation of all people involved that the residents and municipalities of Manitoba can continue to receive assistance in times of disasters. The Board pledges itself to that cooperation.

APPENDIX "A"

REPORT ON THE EXTENT OF THE SPRING/89 FIRES

SPRING 1989 FOREST FIRE POST EMERGENCY REPORT

A. GENERAL

Manitoba's forested area, with the exception of the Southeastern corner of the Province, received very little precipitation over the winter, this coupled with the drought conditions of the 1988 summer and fall season presented the Department with critical volatile fire conditions.

As predicted by the Department, the extreme winter drought conditions and 1989 spring season with little moisture contributed to critical fire problems which deteriorated beginning the first week of May and by May 10th problem fires were occurring along the agro-forest fringe. Most of these fires were contributed to people caused ignitions.

The Interlake, Western, Eastern and Northwestern Regions developed into problem areas as soon as the snow had left the ground with major fires reported and actioned with the assistance of several government agencies co-ordinated primarily by the Department. The major fires actioned were;

Northwestern Region		Western Region	
Kelsey Lake	(A)	Barrows	(C)
Traders Lake	(B)	Bellsite	(D)
		Swan/Pelican	(E)
Eastern Region		**Interlake**	
Sandy River	(K)	Easterville	(F)
		Ashern	(G)
		Gypsumville/Dauphin River	(H)
		Hodgson/Fisher River	(I)
		Jackhead/Lake St. George	(J)

as indicated on attached map. (Appendix "A")

On May 11, E.M.O. alerted the Central Task Team as to the problems being encountered as life and property were now being threatened.

To June 14, 1989, Manitoba has reported 372 fires, with all but eight, being human caused. These fires have burnt over 773,688 ha and have provided 26,089 employment days to fire crews. Suppression costs todate total $11,122,700.00 as per Appendix "B".

REGIONAL SUMMARY OF FIRES

Region	No.	Forested	Non-Forested	Total
Northeast	43	20.0	82,280.0	82,300.0
Northwest	51	4,367.3	1,096.2	5,463.5
Western	83	58,195.0	17,168.0	75,363.0
Southwest	4	248.5	19.5	268.0
Interlake	112	315,000.0	234,000.0	549,000.0
Eastern	48	39,099.8	13,034.1	52,133.9
Southeast	14	1,599.8	6,574.2	8,174.0
Whiteshell	17	295.6	690.3	985.9
Total	372	418,826.0 ha	354,862.3 ha	773,668.3 ha

B. EMERGENCY RESPONSE ORGANIZATION

- Lead Agency - Manitoba Natural Resources

  Assistance Provided by:

- Manitoba Northern Affairs
- Manitoba Labour - Fire Commissioners Office
- Manitoba Highways & Transportation
- Manitoba Hydro
- Manitoba Telephone System
- Emergency Health Services
- Government Services
- R.C.M.P.
- Canadian Forces, Prairie Region HQ.
- Emergency Measures Organization
- Emergency Preparedness Canada
- Department of Indian and Northern Affairs
- Numerous Fire Departments

C. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- First fires reported to Provincial Fire Centre, April 19, 1989.
- Between May 1 and May 20, 269 fires reported to P.F.C.
- May 10, fires pushed by strong winds began to consume large areas of grassland and some forested land forcing the start of a major fire suppression effort.
- May 11, 1989, Central Task Team called as evacuations were underway or completed.
- During this period, May 11 to May 20, people were evacuated from the communities of:
  - Jackhead
  - Dallas
  - Red Rose
  - Fisher River
  - Camper
  - Anama Bay
  - Cowan
  - Briggs Spur
  - Camperville
  - Red Deer Lake
  - Manigotogan
  - Hole River
  - Seymourville
  - Big Black River
  - Wanipigow Cottage Subdivision
- Travel restrictions were imposed on the affected areas beginning May 12 and ending May 20, 1989.
- Roadblocks were in place in the Eastern, Western and Interlake Regions because of fires crossing or threatening highways and roads.
- Additional manpower and aircraft mobilized at peak - 46 helicopters, 15 waterbombers and over 1,700 people were engaged on direct fire suppression activities.

- Substantial property damage occurred as follows:

  Interlake Region

  - miles of fence lines
  - 15 homes in and around Ashern, Manitoba (G)*
  - damage to 28 other out buildings (G)
  - 2 homes Fisher River Indian Reserve (I)
  - 1 cottage at Lake St. George (J)
  - 1 home at Hodgson (I)
  - 2 homes at Easterville (F)

  Eastern Region

  - 15 cottages at English Lake (K)

  Western Region

  - 2 out buildings at Briggs Spur (E)

* As indicated on Fire Occurrence Map, spring 1989.

D. EMERGENCY COSTS

Direct Fire Suppression Costs to June 15, 1989 $11,122,700.00

E. COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is apparent that Manitoba Natural Resources and the Fire Commissioners Office and staff are not aware of each organization's capabilities.

  a) The Fire Commissioner supplied staff that co-ordinated the evacuation of some areas.

  b) Through the Mutual Aid Program, obtained and moved fire trucks and personnel to protect property.

  c) Provided pumpers for protection in and around communities that could move large volumes of water specifically as set up at Cowan.

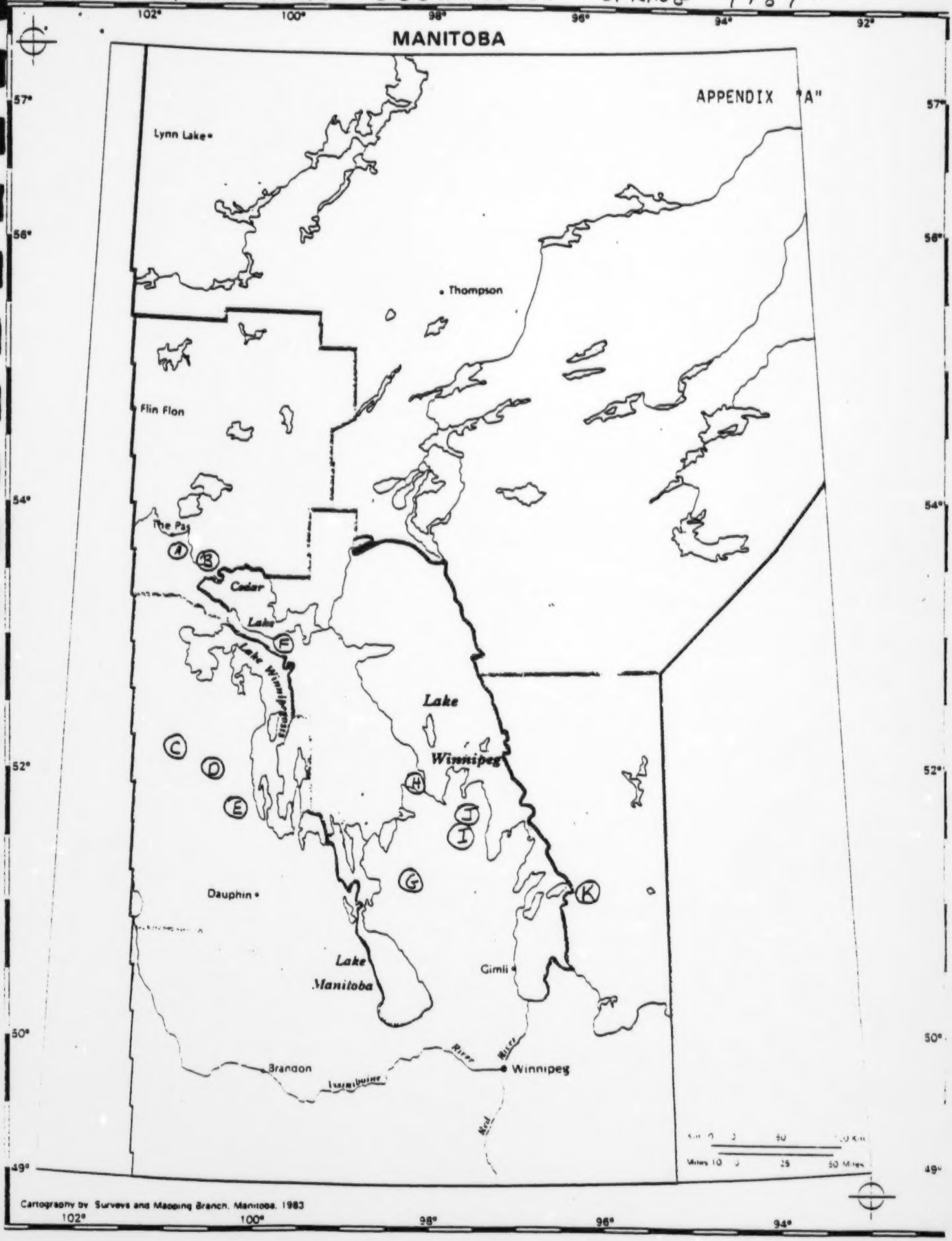
1. We recommend that the Fire Commissioner's field staff meet with Fire Program staff and members of the Provincial Fire Teams this fall to ascertain each others capabilities, lines of authority, responsibilities, etc.

2. That when a grass, forest or bush fire is threatening a community or property the local Mutual Aid District become involved, providing the equipment to protect these towns.

3. A Fire Command System be developed and implemented using and involving Fire Commissioner's staff, Mutual Aid Districts, R.C.M.P., other Government Agencies, local Governments and Manitoba Natural Resources staff.

4. Manitoba Natural Resources enter into formal agreements that stipulate the responsibilities of the various agencies involved in fire suppression activities.

MAJOR FIRE OCCURRENCE SPRING 1989



APPENDIX "B"

1989 Fire - Extra Suppression Costs

From April 1, 1989 to June 14, 1989

	Sandy River/ Manigotogan	Ashern/ Fisher River	Swan/ Pelican	Others	Total
Wages	418.1	498.0	385.0	1,396.3	2,697.4
Aircraft Equipment and supplies	1,836.3	2,216.8	2,053.0	2,099.2	8,205.3
Support from other Departments	60.0	90.0	70.0	--	220.0
TOTAL	2,314.4	2,804.8	2,508.0	3,495.5	11,122.7

APPENDIX "B"

ORDER-IN-COUNCIL 893/88

AUG 9 1988

August 8, 1988: Copied to Administration/M.D.G.S. (M.C.S. 127/88)

Order in Council No. 893

DEPUTY MINISTER AUG 8 1988 OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

ON MATTERS OF STATE

To The Honourable the ADMINISTRATOR Lieutenant Governor in Council

The undersigned, the Minister of Government Services submits for approval of Council a report setting forth that:

WHEREAS it was deemed expedient and in the public interest to establish "The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board" to administer programs of assistance to victims of designated disasters referred to it by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council;

AND WHEREAS by Order-in-Council 686/83, Albert St. Hilaire was appointed as Member and Chairman; Willis Ayers was appointed as Member and Vice-Chairman; and Larry Kehler was appointed as Member of The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, to serve at the pleasure of the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council;

AND WHEREAS by Order-in-Council 428/84, Order-in-Council 686/83 was amended to replace Larry Kehler with Rudy Regehr as a member of the Disaster Assistance Board.

AND WHEREAS it is deemed advisable to revoke the appointments to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board of Albert St. Hilaire, Willis Ayers and Rudy Regehr, effective July 27, 1988.

AND WHEREAS it is deemed advisable to appoint Sydney Reimer, Member and Chairman; Lorne Boguski, Member and Vice-Chairman, and Lois Edie, Member of The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board, effective July 28, 1988 to serve for a one year term to July 27, 1989 inclusive.

THEREFORE he, the Minister, recommends:

THAT the appointments of Albert St. Hilaire, Willis Ayers and Rudy Regehr to the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board be revoked effective July 27, 1988.

THAT the appointments of Sydney Reimer, Member and Chairman; Lorne Boguski, Member and Vice-Chairman; and Lois Edie, Member of The Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board be made effective July 28, 1988 to serve for a one year term to July 27, 1989 inclusive.

THAT the Chairman and Members be paid the salaries, expenses and expenditures and undertakings of said Board from out of the Consolidated Fund with monies authorized under an Act of the Legislature to be so paid and applied, the sum of twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per hour for each hour spent on the business of the Board, together with such actual expenses as they incur in the performance of their duties.

Initiating Department/Agency

Approved By

Authorized Officer

Minister

Approved as to form by:

Solicitor

Signature Albert St. Hilaire

IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WINNIPEG

Upon consideration of the foregoing report and recommendation Council advises that it be done as recommended.

28 July 1988
Date

President or Legislative Minister

AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE IN THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

Approved and Ordered this 29th day of July A.D. 1988

Lieutenant Governor — ADMINISTRATOR

PSF 88

APPENDIX "C"

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT THE FIRES

Cabinet to mull compensation

Some losses from forest fires uncovered by insurance, Enns says

By Janet McFarland

Provincial cabinet ministers will meet this week to discuss compensation for people who suffer losses from the forest fires raging through many parts of Manitoba, Natural Resources Minister Harry Enns said yesterday.

"We will no doubt, as a government, be looking at some form of assistance," Enns said yesterday in an interview.

"Once the smoke clears — and that hasn't happened yet — we will form a committee of cabinet to look into the losses that have been sustained."

Enns said the province will first meet officials from towns and municipalities to try to assess the extent of damage to farmland and buildings.

Many people whose homes or property were destroyed carry private fire insurance, he said, but some things cannot be insured and some people do not have insurance.

"There are just a lot of hardship cases that will be left out," Enns said. "There is always a substantial amount that is non-insurable."

Pastureland, hayfields or machinery left outside farmyards are typical examples of uninsured property, he said.

"Ranchers will require some form of assistance," Enns said. "Just how will be determined in the coming week."

Many of the 15 farm homes destroyed by fire in the Ashern area were privately insured, Enns said. Another 12 properties in the area had other types of buildings damaged by fire.

Only one in 10 people living in the area around Manigotagan, where fires continued to burn yesterday, had house or fire insurance. Firefighters have so far kept flames from reaching the community, but residents have not been allowed to return home.

Reserve homes

Homes were also damaged at the Chemawawin reserve at Easterville and at the Fisher Branch reserve in the Interlake, Natural Resources Department spokesman Don Keith said yesterday. An air cadet cabin on Lake St. George in the Interlake also burned.

Emil Korchinski, director general for Manitoba of the federal Indian Affairs Department, said the department will assume responsibility for reserve homes destroyed by the fire.

In an interview yesterday, Korchinski said they will be replaced with money from the department's capital budget because there is no fire insurance.

He said no decision has been made yet about replacement of other personal property lost in the fire.

"We're going to have to do some work on that tomorrow (today)," he said.

Manitoba is accustomed to losses of Crown timberland during annual forest fires, but seldom has to deal with fires in the more populated southern parts of the province.

"Usually, settlements and farm sites and farm buildings aren't involved," Enns said.

"We have far more experience as a government dealing with flood losses. We have built a fairly sophisticated system for dealing with that."

Last year, forest fires damaged cottages in the eastern part of the province around Wallace Lake, but the province decided not to compensate owners. Enns said yesterday that decision was made in different circumstances.

"There was a slightly different philosophy involved," he said. "We viewed that a little differently from the point of view that no one's livelihood or principal dwelling was being destroyed."

Enns said he did not know whether compensation would be considered for people who had to remove to another location.

Province to start assessing fire damage, minister says

Wpg Free Press MAY 18/89

By Catherine Mitchell

The assessment of damage from forest fires in the Ashern area will start soon, Government Services Minister Albert Driedger said yesterday.

Driedger said cabinet decided to have Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board investigators conduct initial assessments immediately to expedite claims.

"It's very sad and tragic," he said after returning from an afternoon trip to the fire-ravaged area.

Emergency workers usually rush to save houses, but uninsured buildings and equipment often are sacrificed, he said.

The disaster assistance board will pay damage claims on uninsured public and private property after approval by cabinet. After the first $1 million, the assistance is cost-shared with Ottawa.

"It is important that this process proceed as quickly as possible," Driedger said. "The people of Ashern and district have been through a difficult time and undue delays will not be tolerated."

But Liberal MLAs who toured the Interlake area Tuesday said the Filmon government's efforts have not been sufficient.

Gwen Charles (Selkirk) said a fact-finding mission she and two others took to assess fire damage and the needs of Interlake families showed the province is failing to help residents hurt by the fires.

"Families are homeless and yet the Tories have no plans to help these fire victims," Charles said.

Charles and rural development critic Gilles Roch (Springfield) said the 20-per-cent deductible assessed against claimants seeking compensation from the disaster assistance board should be waived.

But Driedger said the 20-per-cent deductible is part of the assistance assessment formula and cannot be waived.

Fire relief vowed

Province to pay $1.5 million for damages

The province expects to pay about $1.5 million in compensation for losses resulting from recent forest fires, the minister responsible for the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board said yesterday.

"We feel the situation is tragic enough that they (victims) should be able to file for compensation," Albert Driedger said.

Driedger said cabinet has authorized the disaster assistance board to begin inspections of damaged properties, beginning in the Swan River and Ashern areas.

He said compensation will be paid to private property owners for damage to uninsurable property, such as fences, feed and cattle.

Private claims will be assessed up to a maximum of $30,000, with a 20-per-cent deductible.

Driedger said the province expects to pay about $1 million on private claims, and about $500,000 to municipalities to cover public costs, including firefighting.

He said the province spent about $7 million fighting fires this spring.

WPG Free Press
May 26/89.